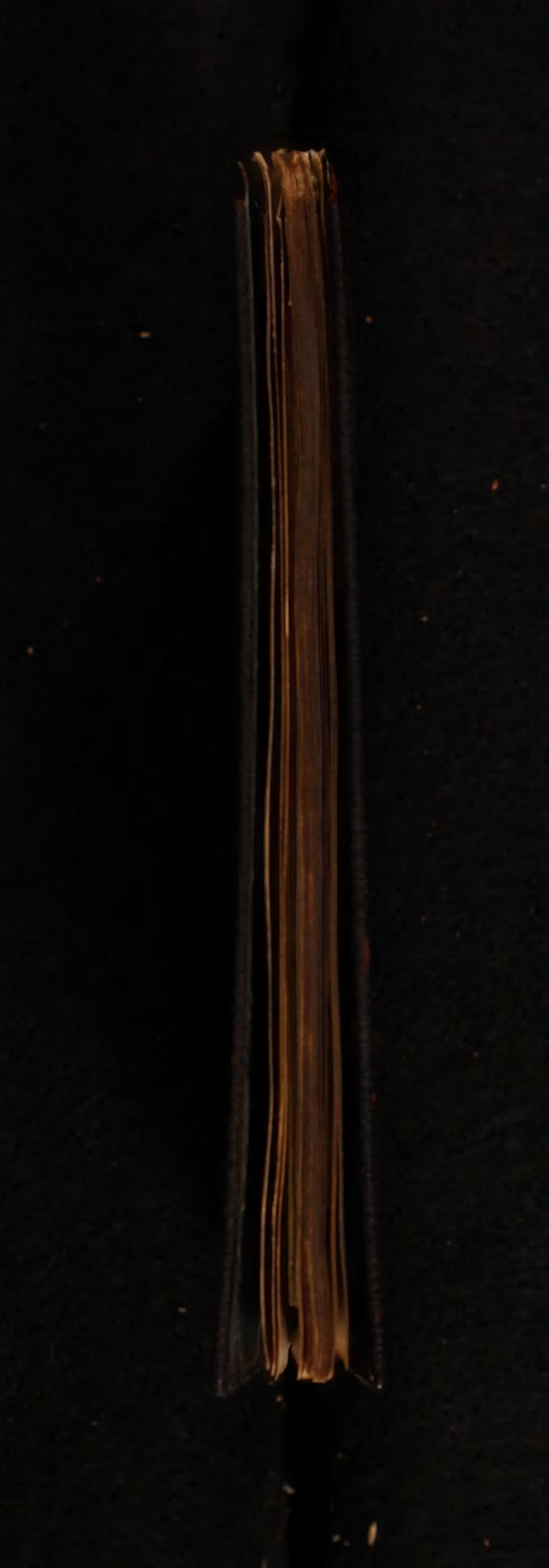
REGULATED SLAVE TRADE

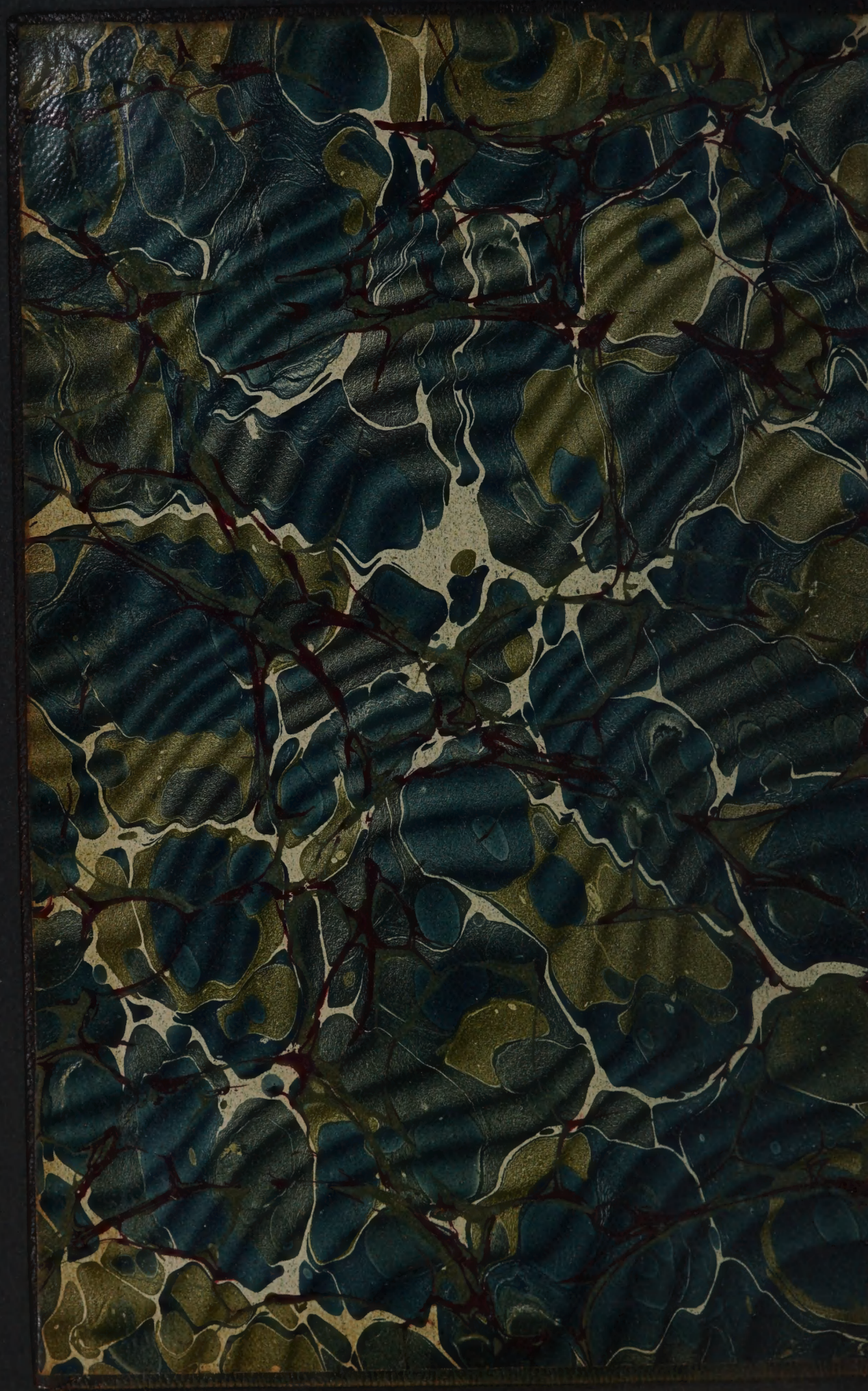
FROM EVIDENCE OF ROBERT STOKES

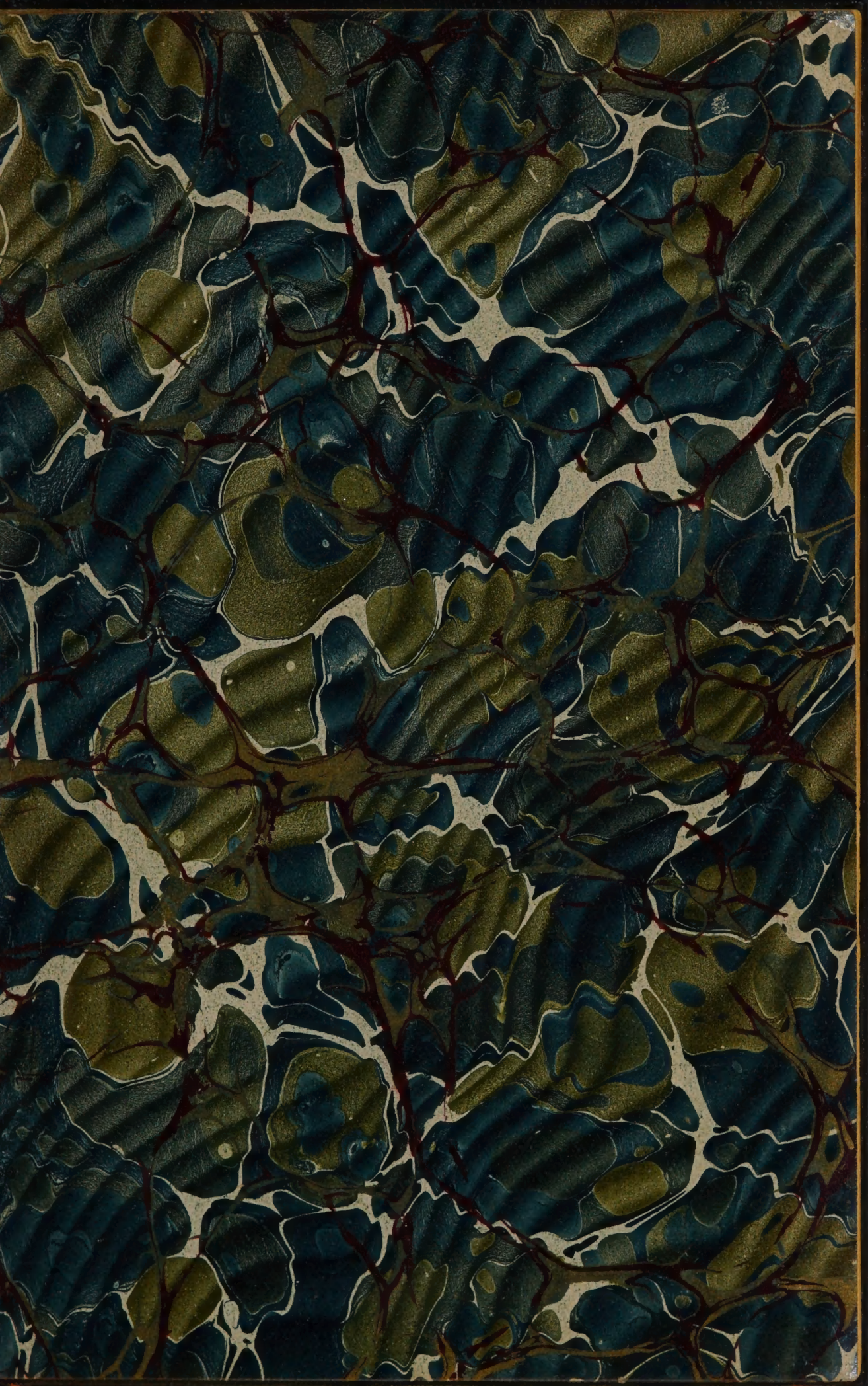
WITH PLATE

1849

REGULATED SLAVE TRADE







326.1
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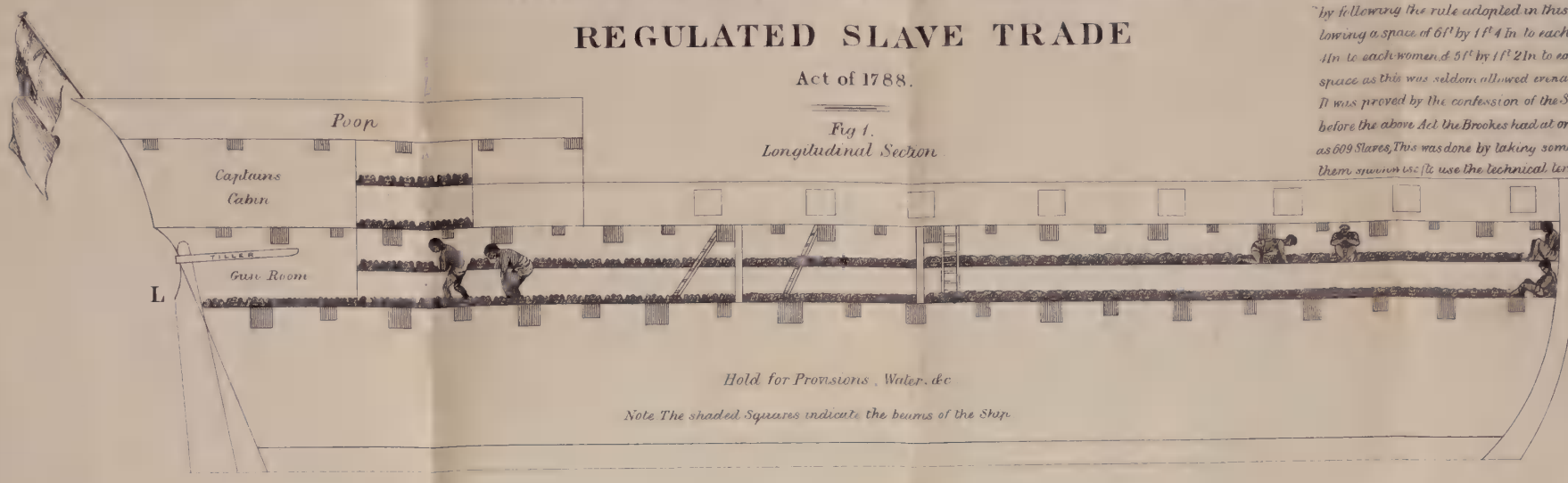
STOWAGE OF THE BRITISH SLAVE SHIP "BROOKES" UNDER THE

REGULATED SLAVE TRADE

Act of 1788.

Fig 1.
Longitudinal Section



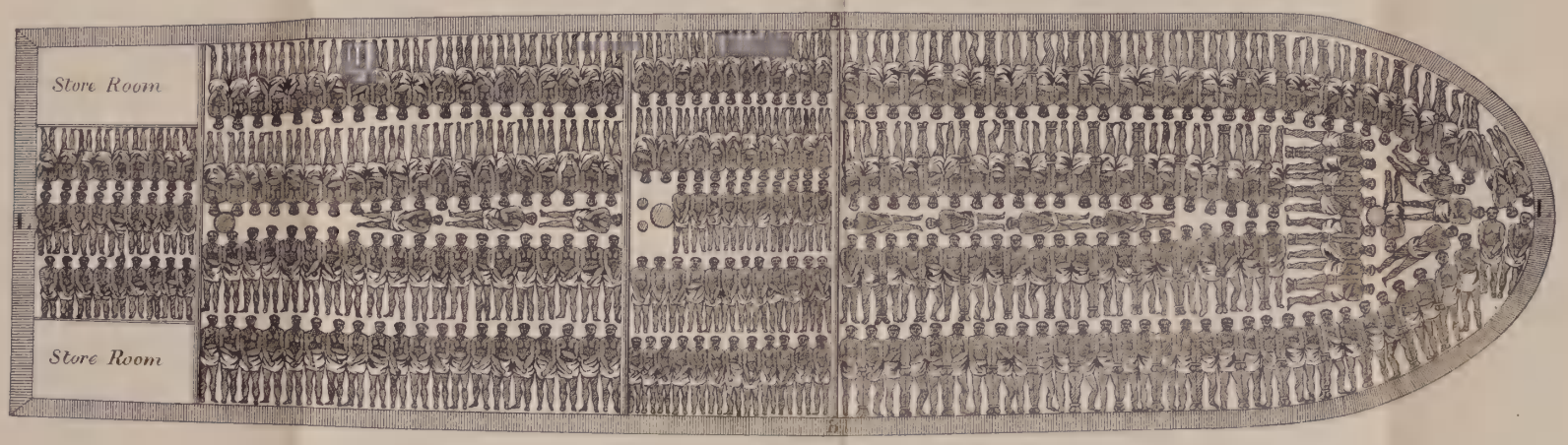
Note. The "Brookes" after the Regulation Act of 1788, was allowed to carry 454 Slaves, She could stow this number by following the rule adopted in this plate namely of allowing a space of 6ft by 1ft 4In to each man, 5ft 10In by 1ft 4In to each women & 5ft by 1ft 2In to each boy, but so much space as this was seldom allowed even after the Regulation Act It was proved by the confession of the Slave Merchant that before the above Act the Brookes had at one time carried as many as 609 Slaves, This was done by taking some out of Irons & locking them spoon wise (to use the technical term) that is by stowing one within the distended legs of the other.

Shelf or Platform of the
L *Lower Deck*

PLAN OF LOWER DECK WITH THE STOWAGE OF 292 SLAVES

130 OF THESE BEING STOWED UNDER THE SHELVES AS SHEWN IN FIGURE 6 & FIGURE 8.

Fig 2



PLAN SHEWING THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES (IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOWED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES BETWEEN THE BEAMS: AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. *See Fig 1.*

Fig 3

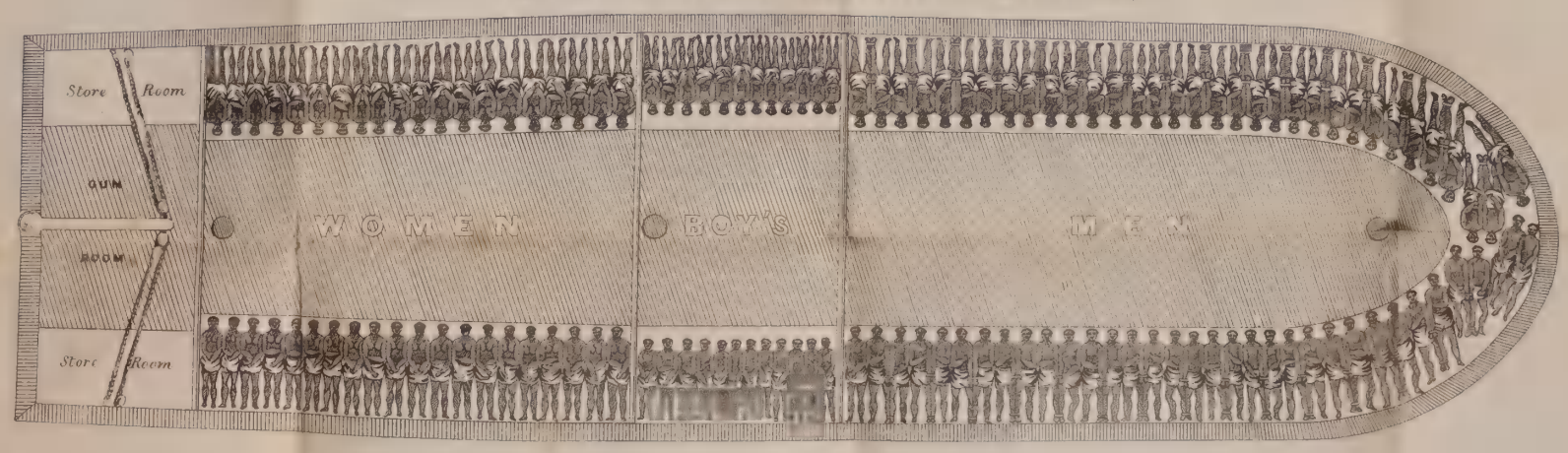


Fig 4
Cross Section at the Poop

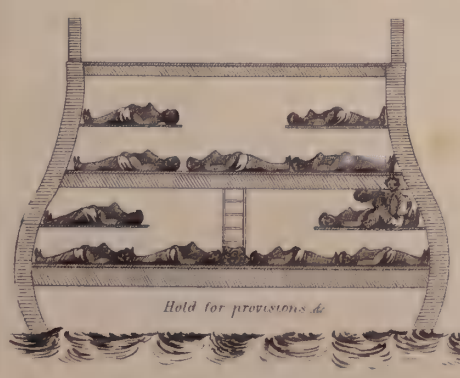


Fig 5
Cross Section amidships

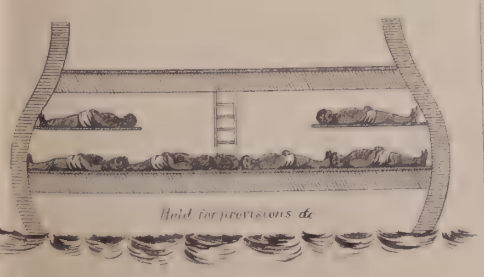


Fig 6
Lower tier of Slaves under the Poop

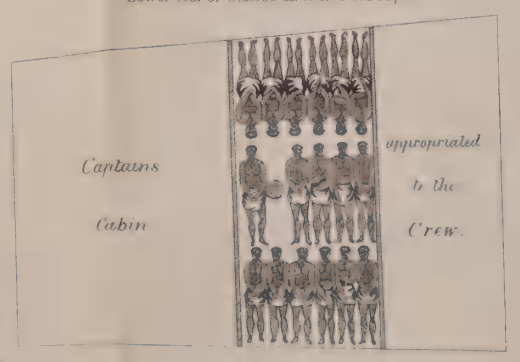
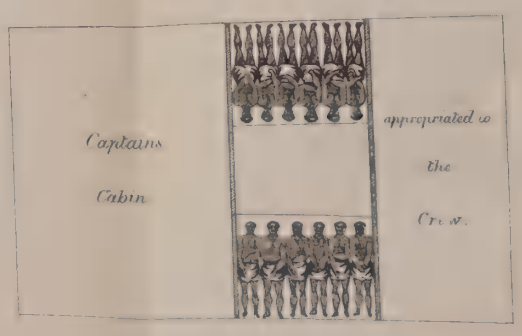
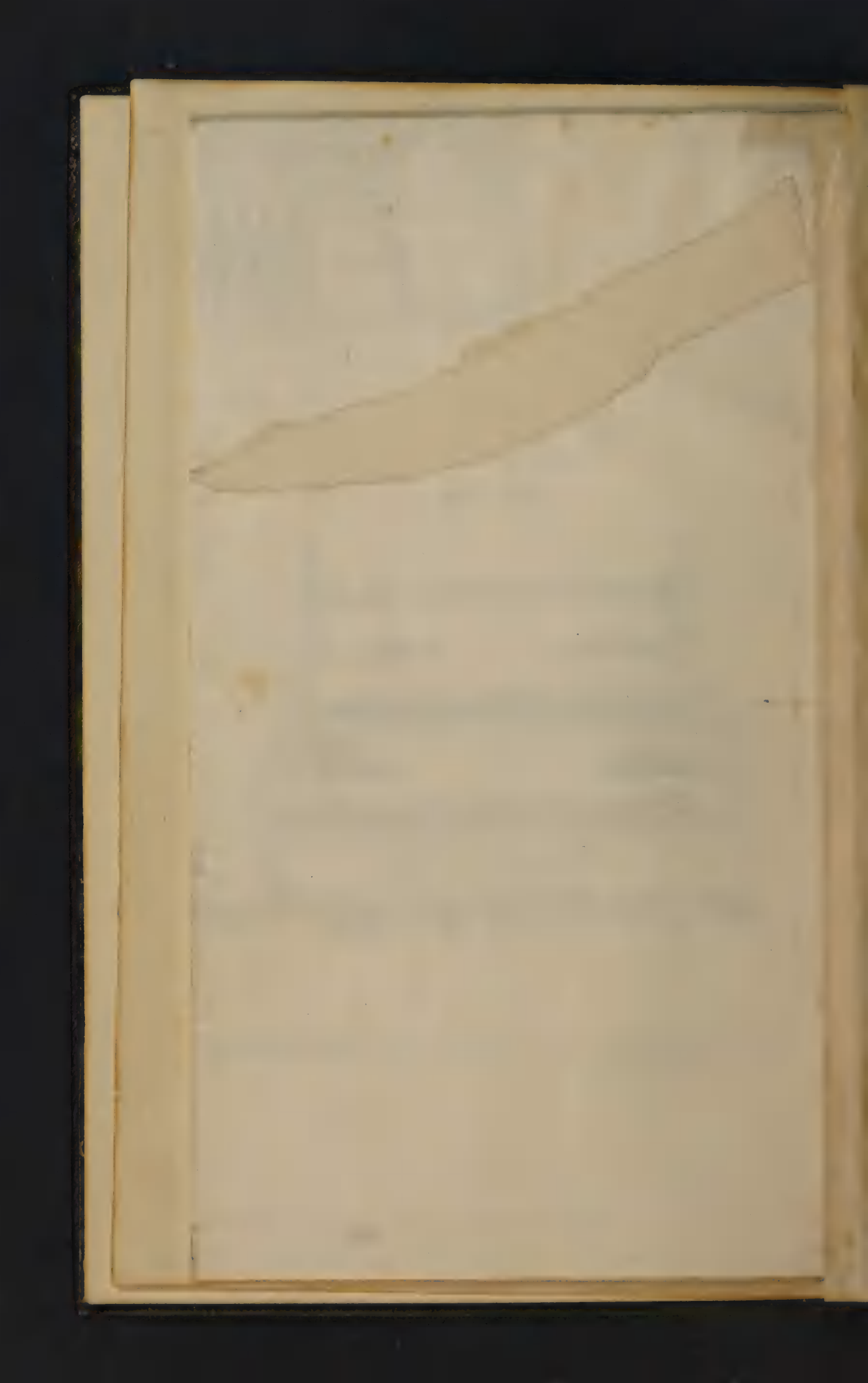


Fig 7.
Shelf tier of Slaves under the Poop



Scale of Feet
0 5 10 20 30

J Arrowsmith, Litho



REGULATED SLAVE TRADE.

FROM THE EVIDENCE OF ROBERT STOKES, ESQ.,

GIVEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE

HOUSE OF LORDS, IN 1849,

With a plate showing the Stowage of a British Slave Ship,

DURING THE REGULATED SLAVE TRADE.

"True humanity consists not in a squeamish ear; it consists not in starting or shrinking at tales such as these, but in a disposition of heart to relieve misery. True humanity appertains rather to the mind than to the nerves, and prompts men to use real and active endeavours to execute the measures which it suggests."—Fox's *Speech on the Slave Trade*, April 2, 1792.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY;

BIGG, PARLIAMENT STREET; HATCHARD, PICCADILLY.

EDINBURGH: W. F. WATSON, 52, PRINCES STREET.

1851.

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PREFACE.

THE following evidence of Mr. Stokes*, a gentleman who has the longest and fullest practical knowledge of all the facts connected with the English Slave Trade of former times, has been reprinted from the Report of the Lords' Committee [1849], as it affords, from the most authentic sources, a true picture of what the Slave Trade was when carried on by Englishmen, both as regards the period antecedent to 1788, when it was wholly unrestricted,—when the interest of those concerned was the only security for the good treatment of the slaves; and, secondly, as regards the period after 1788, when it was regulated by Acts of Parliament.

It may be asked, Why enter on the question of regulating the Slave Trade, when for half a century England has declared it Piracy, and thirty-five years

* Author of a pamphlet entitled "*The Foreign Slave Trade: account of its present state, and of the laws and treaties relating thereto,*" *&c.*—Hatchard and Son, 1837; and of "*A Memoir of the life of Z. Macaulay, as connected with the Abolition of Slavery and of the Slave Trade*"—Hatchard and Son, 1837. In early life Mr. Stokes was confidentially employed by the *Original* "*London Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade,*" and continued in uninterrupted intercourse with its leading members (Wilberforce, Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Zachary Macaulay, Sir Fowell Buxton, &c.) to the period of their deaths, and subsequently has enjoyed the confidence of their successors to the present period.

have elapsed since the whole civilized world, with one voice, declared it to be a great crime? The reply is, that for the existing measures of repression one single substitute has been proposed; namely, *that England should*, for an undefined period, *sanction the Slave Trade of Brazil under certain regulations, and that British functionaries should be stationed at the slave marts, to superintend the traffic.* Nor can this proposal be treated as altogether unworthy of serious notice, since it has been referred to with approbation by Mr. Gladstone, in his place in Parliament.

There is also an impression abroad by which many persons reconcile to themselves the notion of leaving the Slave Trade to itself, namely, that self-interest will render the traffic humane. If so, why was it regulated in 1788?—But the unanswerable testimony here reprinted proves not only that a slave trade left to itself involves the most terrible suffering to which human beings can be subjected; but that *the Regulated Slave Trade of Great Britain* was, in spite of every effort of Parliament, and *of provisions effectively carried out*, still *a course of suffering and misery*, inferior only to the same pursuit unrestricted.

Let those who talk of leaving the Slave Trade to itself, under the idea that Brazil would regulate the traffic, remember that any material improvement in the condition of the slave on the voyage, can only be accomplished by regulations which would involve increased expenses, and diminished profits. There must then ever be a strong temptation to disregard such provisions, which could, therefore, only

be rendered effective by stringent laws rigidly enforced; but how can we anticipate such a state of things in the Slave Trade of Brazil? From every quarter we have one unanimous declaration—"*The Government of Brazil is absolutely powerless.*" Dreadful then, as even a Regulated Slave Trade must ever be, let no man pretend that such is the measure of wretchedness to which the unhappy African would be condemned. No; if the squadron were withdrawn, the Slave Trade must rage unrestricted and without limit. With Mr. Stokes evidence before our eyes, it is mere hypocrisy to pretend that any mitigation would arise from motives of self-interest, or that the Brazilian trade would be less terrible than that carried on by Englishmen before any restrictions were in force; that different motives would operate or different results be produced.

The country, however, has not only proof of what unlimited Slave Trade was, and always must be; but it has proof, equally unanswerable, *of the mitigation of horror and mortality effected by the measures of repression which it is now sought to abandon, compared even with that endured in the Regulated Slave Trade;* measures, which though from obvious and remediable causes not yet crowned with complete success, have, nevertheless, saved hundreds of thousands from the horrors of the Slave Trade, and which if directed henceforth by the experience of the past, will soon compass the end which is still dear to the hearts of Englishmen.

Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Hook, and Mr. Rendall, in

their despatches*, show how utterly erroneous are the assertions of an increased mortality in the traffic. The average mortality in the regulated slave trade of England is admitted by the tables in the Report of Mr. Hutt's Committee, *to have been* 14 *per cent.;* whereas, Sir Charles Hotham, on whose evidence Mr. Hutt lays so much stress, *proves by official documents,* that even in captured vessels, when the want of experience in their treatment causes some increase of mortality in the slaves, *the average loss is now only* 9 *per cent.!*

This reduced mortality, moreover, he distinctly attributes to its true cause, namely, the effect produced by the British squadron. He says that the slaves are now carried "*with comparative ease and comfort;*" that if the squadron were removed, the Slave Trade would be greatly increased in its horrors, and "*it "would be impossible to calculate the calamities which "would ensue;*" and that, without providing a substitute for the present system, "*leaving out of account "the negroes' suffering, he would not abandon it, "because he is unwilling to see his country descend "from the high position which it has hitherto held in "the eyes of the world*†."

To many persons it may appear startling that the mortality in the present contraband trade should be so much less than that which existed even in the English regulated Slave Trade; but to any one who inves-

* Appended to Lords' Report, pp. 89, 203, 204.

† See Sir C. Hotham's Evidence, Commons' 1st Report for 1849. Q. 670, 678, 679, 680, 854.

tigates the subject the causes will be clear, and the plan of the ship "Brookes," supplied by Mr. Stokes, will greatly assist the inquiry.

First.—The slave ships, formerly, whether in the unrestricted or in the regulated trade, were ordinary merchant vessels, of very dull sailing qualities.

Secondly.—They formed their own factories on reaching the coast, purchased their own slaves, and, owing to the competition, were often many months collecting their cargoes; and during that time a large proportion of the human cargo was kept on board, confined in the hold.

Thirdly.—The slaves being stowed on several tiers or decks one below the other, as shown in Mr. Stokes' plan, the want of ventilation, rendered the atmosphere, especially of the lowest and principal deck, in the last degree fœtid and unwholesome.

Under present circumstances, on the other hand, permanent slave factories for collecting the cargoes, and keeping them ready for shipping at any moment, are absolutely indispensable. In the barracoons, the slaves are in much the same condition as *when at rest* on a sugar plantation, and the slave dealer is interested in keeping them in perfect health. The moment the slave-vessel appears, the slaves are shipped, and in an hour or two she is under sail on the return voyage.* The fastest sail-

* The principal foundation for the assertion that now the slaves are more crowded than formerly, is explained in the following extracts from Captain Denman's pamphlet on Mr. Hutt's Committee:—"There is one fertile source of error which requires notice. In 1839, a new scale for admeasuring the tonnage of ships came into force, which, in order to encourage the building of better

ing-vessels in the world are now employed in the trade, so that the voyage only lasts about half as long as formerly, and the previous confinement on board is

models, gave a great advantage to the finer description of vessels, as the mode of calculation reduced their nominal size far below their real capacity of stowage; and the dues which are, for the most part, levied on the registered tonnage, thenceforth fell much more lightly on sharp vessels. The Cowes' yachts, for instance, were thus, by a stroke of the pen, cut down to less than two-thirds their former tonnage, in some cases to less than one-half. The "Alarm," Mr. Weld's famous yacht, by the old scale, 193 tons, was now registered as 95 tons.

"By the same process, slave ships, when captured, became nominally half the size they would have been called previously, the bounty on tonnage due to the captors being paid by the new scale, to the great disadvantage of the cruizers. In two cases, the "Reglano" and "Vanguardia," condemned in 1840, the surveyor happened to furnish the court with their tonnage by both scales. By the new scale, the "Reglano," which had been seized with 350 slaves on board, measured 48 tons,—an unheard-of number to such a tonnage, looking to the old scale; but by the old scale, the burden was 116 tons; thus showing exactly the former average of three slaves to a ton. So, what appears at first sight a new era—in which near twice as many slaves to a ton were carried as before—was, in point of fact, merely an arbitrary change in the mode of admeasurement, expressly intended to give an advantage to a certain class of merchant vessels. Thus, also, the "Vanguardia," a very old vessel, which would have been in previous years, if captured, considered 194 tons burden, was condemned in 1840 as of only 81! These are the only two cases in which, as far as we know, the tonnage of slave vessels has been given according to both scales.

A yet greater cause of error in comparing the crowding of slave vessels at present and in former times, is explained as follows. Referring to the English Regulated Slave Trade, Sir Fowell Buxton says, in his work on the Slave Trade, p. 132:—"I am informed that the slavers which have been brought to this country and remeasured, have been proved to be of much less tonnage than that stated in their papers: for instance, the 'Napoleon,' said to be 71 tons, was found to be only 31; the 'William Allen,' said to be 350 tons, was found to be only 134 tons."

entirely prevented. The models best adapted for fast sailing admit of only one deck or tier, and these being close to capacious hatchways, the slaves breathe a far purer air than could ever penetrate to the holds of such vessels as were used formerly, and would be used again if the slave trade were thrown open.

That the measures in force have very greatly diminished the traffic, and have in the diminished traffic greatly mitigated the suffering, are facts open to every one who cares to make the investigation.

This evidence, however, only refers to the question of comparative suffering; let the facts recorded by Mr. Stokes, remind the people of England of *the inevitable horror of all slave trade.* Nor let their eyes be fixed solely on the middle passage, which is but a short chapter in this terrible history of wrong and suffering. No regulation can reach the interior of Africa, where, if the Slave Trade is thrown open, men will be hunted like wild beasts to supply an unlimited and perpetual demand on the coast. No regulation can be extended to the mines and plantations of Brazil, where the misery of the slave increases precisely as his value falls, and the difficulty of replacing him is diminished. If there be one man who would deliberately resign his fellows to such a fate, persuading himself that Brazil could mitigate the middle passage by regulations, let him remember the language addressed to Parliament by Fox, and afterwards recognised as an eternal truth by the nation:—"THERE CAN BE NO REGULATION OF ROBBERY AND MURDER."

EVIDENCE

OF ROBERT STOKES, Esq., BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS, 1849.

THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD IN THE CHAIR.

ROBERT STOKES, ESQUIRE, IS CALLED IN, AND EXAMINED, AS FOLLOWS:—

2750. HAS your attention been long called to the state of the African Slave Trade?

For many years; from the year 1800.

2751. Have you made yourself master of what is to be learnt from the reports concerning its state at different times during that period?

To a very considerable extent.

2752. Are you aware that it is stated that the effect of the cruisers posted by England upon the coast of Africa has been to lead to the crowding of the slave vessels, and so to increase the suffering of the slaves?

I have understood that that has been generally reported.

2753. Are you able to give the Committee any facts which would throw light upon the truth or falsehood of that assertion?

Yes; to show that the state of crowding prior to the abolition of the Slave Trade by Great Britain was quite equal to anything that we have heard of since.

2754. Would not that go to establish that the crowding was not the result of cruisers being stationed upon the coast, but the natural course of the traffic itself?

Certainly; I think decidedly so.

2755. Will you put the Committee in possession of any facts to which you are able to speak, which show that the crowding was as great as it now is at the time when no cruisers were stationed upon the coast?

I will do so. Understanding that it was probable I should be called to give evidence before this Committee upon that point, I have looked over the evidence which was given in former years before this House, and before the House of Commons also; and I have made a few short extracts, showing the state of the slave-vessels at an early period, previously to 1792; they are not very numerous; I have merely given them as a sample. I will state the source from which I have derived this information; it has been from the evidence given at the bar of the House of Commons in 1792. This evidence was very voluminous, filling, when printed, three folio volumes; and it being deemed probable that only very few Members of Parliament would be found who would wade through the whole of it, it was thought desirable by Mr. Wilberforce and his friends that an abstract of it should be prepared, especially with a view to the convenience of such Members. This abridgment was accordingly executed by William Burgh, Esquire, of York; Thomas

Babington, Esquire, late M.P. for Leicester; the Reverend Thomas Gisborne, of Yoxall Lodge, and one or two others; and that no misrepresentation of any person's testimony might be made, Matthew Montague, Esquire, M.P., and the Honourable E. J. Elliott, M.P., undertook to examine the abridgment with the original text, and to strike out or correct whetever they thought to be erroneous, and to insert whatever they thought to have been omitted. This having been done, the abstract was then printed, and Mr. Wilberforce presented it to the House of Commons as a faithful abridgment of the whole evidence, and it was received as such under the guarantee of Mr. Montague and Mr. Elliott. Similar extracts, exhibiting the enormous cruelties, over-crowding, &c., practised in this traffic before it was abolished by England, might be multiplied to almost any extent from the evidence given before the Privy Council in 1788, a Committee of the House of Commons in 1789, at the bar of the House of Lords in 1792, &c. &c.; but I have confined myself to that taken before a Committee of the whole House of Commons in 1792, as it enables me to use the words of the abridgment, the correctness of which is guaranteed, as before stated, and as they serve well as an example of the mass which might be produced.

The same was read, as follows:—

Mr. Knox has been a Surgeon in the Slave Trade, and subsequently between seven and eight

years Commander of an African slave ship, Most generally, he said, the slaves in his ship had room to lie on their backs; sometimes not. In his last voyage, as Surgeon in the "Tartar" 1781-2, the slaves wanted room. Of his 602 negroes, few, except upon deck, had the breadth of their backs; believes the tonnage to have been from 130 to 150 tons. In another voyage they were pretty much in the same situation. The vessel was 106 or 108 tons register; the slaves 450, whites 45.

Isaac Wilson, a surgeon in the Navy, made a voyage to Africa in the "Elizabeth," John Smith, from London, 370 tons; sailed 10th May, 1788; returned 6th December, 1789; took on board 602 slaves; all confined at night between decks (a few women excepted); lost 155; primary cauuse of death in two-thirds melancholy; no other fatal disorder. Had an hospital, but the sick slaves lay on the bare planks, which, by the motion of the vessel, caused excoriations from the prominent parts of the body. Slaves much crowded below; generally took off his shoes before going down, and was very cautious lest he should tread upon the slaves. Three other vessels, belonging to the same house, the "Elizabeth," Wallis, brought 450 slaves, and buried above 200 before her arrival in the River Plate. The "Favourite" bought 468 in Africa; mortality, 73. The "Elizabeth," Marshall, bought 546; mortality, 158.

Dr. Thomas Trotter made a voyage as Surgeon of the "Brookes*," from Liverpool to the West

* The plate at the end of the pamphlet shows the stowage

Coast in 1783, when she carried 600 slaves [see page 17]; was ten months on the coast; says slaves in the passage are so crowded below, that it is impossssble to walk through them without treading on them. Those who are out of irons are locked spoonways (in the technical phrase) to one another. It is the first mate's duty to see them stowed this way every morning; those who do not get quickly into their places are compelled by the cat. In this situation, when the ship had much motion, they were often miserably bruised. In the passage, when the scuttles must be shut, the gratings are not sufficient for airing the rooms; he never himself could breathe freely, unless immediately under the hatchway. Never saw ventilators used in these ships; a windsail was often tried on the coast, but he remembers none used in the passage. Has seen the slaves drawing their breath with all those laborious and anxious efforts for life which are observed in expiring animals subjected by experiment to foul air, or in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump; has also seen them when the tarpaulings have inadvertently been thrown over the gratings, attempting to heave them up, crying out, "Kickeraboo! kickeraboo!" *i. e.*, "We are dying." On removing the tarpauling and gratings, they would fly to the hatchways with all the signs of terror and dread of suffocation; many whom he

of slaves on board this ship; not in the year 1783, when she stowed 609 slaves, but subsequently to the passing of Sir W. Dolben's Act, when she was restricted to 454.

has ssen in a dying state have recovered by being brought thither, or on the deck; others were irrecoverably lost by suffocation, having had no previous signs of indisposition.

James Morley, Gunner of the "Medway," made six voyages to Africa, the first in 1760, the last in 1776; says,—When there has been a full purchase, the slaves are closely stowed, but when a short purchase, and they have had mortality, they have more room. He has been employed in a full ship in stowing them as close as he possibly could. In most ships he has been in, the men were in irons all the passage; in full ships he has seen them in great perspirations, especially when rains obliged them to keep the gratings long covered; he has wiped them, and seen them wiped in perspirations so violent as to give reason to think, if they had been long kept so close, suffocation must have ensued, but this he never fouud. He has seen them under great difficulty of breathing; the women particularly often get upon the beams, where the gratings are raised with banisters, about four feet above the combings, to give air, but they are generally driven down, because they take the air from the rest. He has known rice held in the mouths of sea-sick slaves until they were almost strangled; he has seen the surgeon's mates force the pannikin between their teeth, and throw the medicine over them, so that not half of it went into their mouths, the poor wretches wallowing in their blood or excrements, hardly having life, and this

with blows of the cat, d—ing them for sulky black ——. He delcares he has known the doctor's mate report a slave dead, and have him thrown overboard, when he has seen him struggle in the water; no one could imagine why, only to get clear of the trouble.

Sir George Young, Captain in the Royal Navy, has made four voyages to Africa, in 1767, 1768, 1771, 1772; has been several times on board slave ships; they were all in a state of cleanliness, as clean as their situation, with the number of men confined on board, would admit of. He attempted to go down the fore hatchway of one of them, but was deterred by the stench, which was intolerable, though there were then only 300 on board, and waited for 200 more. The men slaves were all chained, which he considered as a necessary precaution, as there were not quite 20 seamen on board at the time.

Henry Ellison, Gunner of Her Majesty's Ship "Resistance," has been employed in the African trade; thinks his first voyage was in 1759; remained in the trade till 1770. He has seen slaves faint away in ships from heat and stench. They were always much crowded; had two tier of people on one deck, one on a platform. They were much crowded in the "Nightingale," a small Snow about 170 tons; purchased 270 slaves; 30 boys messed and slept in the long-boat all the middle passage; no room below. The "Briton," 230 or 240 tons; much crowded; purchased 375 slaves. Thinks only buried six or

seven in the "Nightingale;" were remarkably healthy. They buried near 200 in the "Briton;" last man brought on board had the small-pox. Doctor told Mr. Wilson it was the small-pox, who would not believe it, but said he would keep him, as he was a fine man; it soon broke out amongst the slaves; he has seen the platform one continued scab. Hauled up eight or ten slaves dead of a morning; the flesh and skin peeled off their wrists when taken hold of, many entirely mortified. They buried in the "Nightingale's" second voyage about 150, chiefly of fevers and flux.

Mr. Claxton sailed in the "Garland," Captain Forbes, for Africa, 1788, as Surgeon's Mate, and there, on the Bonny Coast, commenced Surgeon to the "Young Hero" brig, Captain Molyneaux. They had 250 slaves, of whom 132 died, chiefly of the flux; so crowded that they could only lie on their sides; if they did otherwise, it created quarrels among them; they were stowed so close that he could not go among them with his shoes without danger of hurting them. This crowded state aggravated their sufferings when ill, and tended to increase the disorder; it was impossible to treat them with the necessary accommodations. The steerage and boy's room insufficient to receive the sick, so greatly did the disorder prevail; they were, therefore, obliged to place together those that were and those that were not diseased, and, in consequence, the disease and mortality spread more and more; the Captain treated them with more tenderness than he has heard was usual, but the men were not humane.

Some of the diseased were obliged to be kept on deck, with a sail spread for them to lie on ; this, in a little time, became nearly covered with blood and mucus, which involuntarily issued from them, and therefore the sailors, who had the disagreeable task of cleaning the sail, grew angry with the slaves, and used to beat them inhumanly with their hands or with a cat ; the slaves, in consequence, grew fearful of committing this involuntary action, and when they perceived they had done it, would immediately creep to the tubs, and there sit straining with such violence as to produce a *prolapsus ani*, which could not be cured. The same punishments were inflicted, for the same cause, on those who were not quite so ill. Slaves whose flux was accompanied with scurvy, and such œdematous swellings of the legs as made it pain to move at all, were made to dance, as they call it, and whipped with a cat if they were reluctant. The slaves, both when ill and well, were frequently forced to eat against their inclinations ; were whipped with a cat if they refused. They used other means still worse and too nauseous to mention. The parts on which their shackles are fastened are often excoriated by the violent exercise they are forced to take, and of this they made many grievous complaints to him. Fell in with the "Hero," Wilson, which had lost, he thinks, 360 slaves by death ; he is certain more than half of her cargo ; learnt this from the surgeon ; they had died mostly of the small-pox ; surgeon also told him that when removed from one place to another, they left marks of their skin and blood upon the deck

and that it was the most horrid sight he had ever seen.

Alexander Falconbridge, Surgeon, made four voyages to Africa 1780 to 1787; says,—When employed in stowing slaves, made the most of the room, and wedged them in; they had not so much room as a man in his coffin, either in length or breadth; impossible for them to turn or shift with any degree of ease; had often occasion to go from one side of their rooms to the other; always took off his shoes, but could not avoid pinching them; has the marks on his feet where they bit and scratched him. In every voyage when the ship was full, they complained of heat and want of air. Confinement in this situation so injurious, that he has known them go down apparently in good health at night, and found dead in the morning. The surgeon goes below the first thing every morning; was never among them ten minutes, but his shirt was wet as if dipped in water. The "Alexander," coming out of Bonny, got aground on the bar; was detained there six or seven days with a great swell and heavy rain; air-ports obliged to be shut, and part of gratings on weather side covered; almost all the men slaves taken ill with the flux; last time he went down, so hot, he took off his shirt; more than twenty had fainted or were fainting; got several hauled upon deck; two or three died, and most of the rest before they reached the West Indies; was down about fifteen minutes, and made so ill that he could not get up without help; was taken of a dysentery and disabled from doing duty the rest of the passage. A place in every

ship for sick slaves; no accommodation for them; they lie on the bare planks; has seen frequently the prominent part of the bones of the emaciated about shoulder-blade and knees, bare. If plaster or bandage applied, they generally removed them. Most prevalent disorders in negro ships are fevers and dysenteries; the consequence of numbers being ill of the latter, extremely noxious; cannot conceive any situation so dreadful and disgusting. In the "Alexander," the deck was covered with blood and mucus; resembled a slaughter-house; the stench and foul air were intolerable; from being down a short time in the "Alexander," is persuaded a night's confinement in that situation would have destroyed him; thinks, as the tradesmen stand many of these inconveniences, cannot be prevented. Slaves shackled together frequently quarrel, he believes, in all slave ships. In each department are three or four tubs; slaves at a distance find it difficult to get over other slaves to them; sometimes if one wants, his companion refuses to go; if relaxed, one exonerates, while disputing over their neighbours; this causes great disturbance. In the "Alexander" has known two or three instances of a dead and living slave found in the morning shackled together.

Mr. Stokes. I have prepared, also, a faithful abstract of the Evidence produced on cross-examination at the bar of the House of Commons in 1792, from the witnesses brought forward by the slave-trading party, in opposition to Sir William Dolben's Bill for regulating the carrying of slaves,

then before the House. No witnesses were brought by the Abolitionists. Every slave, whatever his size might be, was found to have only five feet and six inches in length, and sixteen inches in breadth to lie in. The floor was covered with bodies stowed or packed according to this allowance; but between the floor and deck, or ceiling, were often platforms, or broad shelves in the midway,* which were covered with bodies also. The height from the floor to the ceiling, within which space the bodies on the floor and those on the platform lay, [two tiers of human beings], seldom exceeded five feet eight inches, and in some cases it did not exceed four feet. The men were chained two and two together by their hands and feet, and were chained, also, by means of ring bolts, which were fastened to the deck. They were confined in this manner at least while they remained on the coast, which was from six weeks to six months, as it might happen. Their allowance consisted of one pint of water a day to each person, and they were fed twice a day with yams and horse-beans. After meals they jumped up in their irons for exercise. This was so necessary for their health, that they were whipped if they refused to do it, and this jumping was termed dancing. They were usually fifteen or sixteen hours below deck out of the twenty-four. In rainy weather they could not be brought

* That is, in the midway as to height, between the floor of the deck and the beams, these platforms or shelves projected horizontally from the ship's sides.—See plan, figs. 1, 3, 4, 5.

up for two or three days together. If the ship was full, their situation was then distressing; they drew their breath with anxious and laborious efforts, and some died of suffocation.

It is asserted by the advocates for the withdrawal of all restrictions on the Slave Trade, that it is called for on the ground of humanity, as, were the trade left entirely open, the self-interest of the slave-trader would be a sufficient guarantee for the merciful treatment of his victims; that it was not so in respect of Englishmen in former times, the foregoing extracts from the evidence will clearly show. Mr. Clarkson, in his "History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," says, that in his first interview with Mr. Pitt, he (Mr. Pitt) seemed to entertain this opinion, and on this ground appeared to doubt some of the statements made by the advocates of abolition. But Mr. Pitt's speeches in Parliament will show how thoroughly he was subsequently convinced that this his first impression was groundless. The advocates for the withdrawal of the cruisers also say, that such a measure would save the loss of life which now takes place by the long detention of the slaves in barracoons, from want of food and from ill-treatment, in the case of the place of embarkation being watched by a cruiser, and by their being put on board in haste when an opportunity of doing so occurs. But the evidence laid before Parliament prior to the abolition of the Slave Trade will show that it was then no uncommon occurrence for slave vessels to remain on the coast for months collecting

their cargoes, and that during this period their victims were either confined on shore, or on board ship, where they were always chained together, and that it was not till they left the coast that the women were in most instances released from their fetters. The Returns show that a large portion of the deaths which occurred took place on the coast, that is, during the period of detention prior to the commencement of their voyage to the West Indies. I am decidedly of opinion that the sufferings of the slaves were far greater, and the deaths much more numerous from their detention on shipboard, while the cargo was collecting, than has been the case since the establishment of the cruisers has led to their detention in barracoons.* But even before they fell into the hands of the white trader, they were subject to long detention, and suffered from want of food to that degree which made the African, dearly as it is abundantly proved

* The correctness of this opinion is fully confirmed by the Evidence laid by the late Mr. Bandinel before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1848. He states, that Mr. Thomas Edred, who made three Slave voyages before the passing of the Slave Carrying Act, informed the Committee of Privy Council by which he was examined in 1788-9, that he estimated the loss of life in the first voyage at 50 per per cent., and in the latter two at 20 per cent. each; but that he did not attribute these losses from being overcrowded, "but from the vessels being long on the Coast."

Mr. Robert Norris, in his examination before the same Committee, after stating his losses, said "that they (the slaves) died on the coast more than at sea."

Mr. Archibald Dalzell, who made four voyages, after reporting his losses by death, imputed them, not to overloading, "but to their being kept long on the coast."—Vide Appendix to 2nd Report of Parliamentary Committee, Sess. 1848, pp. 295—6.

he loved liberty, prefer slavery to death. The evidence of Mr. Joseph Fayer, who was examined at the bar of the House of Lords on the 25th of May, 1792, who was employed in the African Slave Trade for twenty years as mate and master, will show this to have been the fact. In the year 1788, the ship "Brookes" (the slaver in which Dr. Trotter made his first voyage) was examined and measured by Captain Parry of the Royal Navy who was sent by Government to Liverpool (where she was then lying) to make a Report for the House of Commons of the state of the slave ships lying there. His report mentions the names of the different slave-vessels he visited, and their respective dimensions as taken by him. The first on the list of (I think) 15 or 16, is the "Brookes," the dimensions of which will be found in the plan of that vessel.

DIMENSIONS OF THE SHIP "BROOKES."

Illustrating the Stowage of the British Slave Ship "Brookes" under the Slave-Carrying Regulation Act.

	feet	in.
Length of the lower deck, inside, (gratings and bulk-heads included,) LL, fig. 2	100	0
Breadth of beam on the lower deck, inside, BB, fig. 2	25	4
Depth of hold, from ceiling to ceiling, fig. 1	10	0
Height on lower-deck, between decks, *i.e.* from deck to deck	*5	8

* In this height of 5ft. 8in. between the decks, it must be understood that there are, close to the ship's side, two tiers of men—one tier *upon* the shelf or platform, and the other on the deck, *under* the platform, as seen by the plan, figs. 1, 3, 4 and 5. See, also, note page 12.

	feet	in
Length of the men's room on the lower deck	46	0
Breadth of ditto	25	4
Breadth of the shelves or platforms round the lower deck	6	0
Length of the boys' room....	13	9
Breadth of ditto	25	0
Length of women's room	28	6
Breadth of ditto	23	6
Length of the gun-room, in which the tiller works, ...	10	6
Breadth of ditto	12	0
Length of the quarter-deck or poop	33	6
Breadth of ditto	19	6
Length of the cabin	14	0
Height of ditto	6	2
Length of the half-deck,* or half the space under the poop, immediately before the captain's cabin	16	6
Height of ditto	†6	2
Breadth of the shelves or platforms under the poop	6	0

Mr. Stokes. Let it now be supposed that every man slave is to be allowed six‡ feet by one foot four inches for room, every woman five feet ten by one foot four, every boy five feet by one foot two, and every girl four feet six by one foot; it will follow that the annexed Plan of a slave vessel will be precisely the representation of the ship "Brookes," and the exact number of persons, neither more nor less, than could be stowed in the different rooms of it upon these data. These, if counted will

* The after part of this half-deck contained female slaves, and the other portion of it was, by Act of Parliament, to be appropriated to the crew of the ship. See figs. 6 and 7.

† Vide note on preceding page.

‡ Or six inches less than often allowed. See page 12.

be found to amount to 451. Now, if it be considered that the ship "Brookes" was of 320 tons, and that she was allowed to carry, by Act of Parliament, 454 slaves, it is evident that, if three more could be wedged among the number represented in the Plan, this Plan would contain precisely the number which the Act directs; and if it should be further considered that there ought to be in each apartment in the Plan one or more tubs, as well as stancheons, to support the platforms and decks, for which no deduction has been made, in order to give every possible advantage in stowing, then the above Plan may be considered as giving a very favourable representation of the stowing of the negroes, even after the passing of the Slave-Carrying Regulation Act*. The Plan, therefore, abundantly proves that the stowage of these poor people, as well as the consequences of it, must have been as described by the evidence; for if, when

* The situation of the slaves must have been dreadful, even under the Parliamentary regulations, for their bodies not only touched each other, but many of them had not room to sit upright; for when every deduction has been made, the height above the platform and below it, fig. 1, is, in the "Brookes," but two feet seven inches. The average height in nine other vessels, measured by Captain Parrey, was only five feet two inches, or two feet seven inches in each tier, *minus* the thickness of the platform, (which would reduce it, we may suppose, to two feet five inches); and in the "Venus" and "Kitty," the slaves had less than two feet above or below the platform. The slaves immediately under the beams must have been in a still more dreadful situation, as is seen by the Plan in fig. 1, where these beams are represented by shaded squares.

451 slaves are put into the different rooms of the "Brookes," the floors are not only covered with bodies, but these bodies actually touch each other, what must have been their situation when 600 were stowed in them at the time alluded to by Dr. Trotter, who belonged to this ship, and 609, by the confession of the slave merchants, in a subsequent voyage! Then, with respect to the loss of life: From papers laid on the Table of the House of Lords in 1799, it appears that in the year 1791 (three years after the passing of the Slave-Carrying Act), of 15,754 slaves carried from the coast of Africa, 1378 died during the middle passage, the average length of which was 51 days, making a mortality of $8\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. in that time, or of $62\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, a rate of mortality which would depopulate the earth in a year and seven months. The amount of the mortality in 1792 was, however still more enormous: of 31,554 slaves carried from Africa, no fewer than 5413 died in the passage, making somewhat more than 17 per cent. in 51 days. Had the voyage been prolonged, and the slaves continued to die in the same proportion, the whole number would have been swept away in about ten months.

2756. Then the Committee are to understand that you gather from these extracts, *that the crowding of the slave-vessels before the institution of the cruising system was as great as it is at present?*

Quite as great.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE evidence of Mr. Stokes before the Lords' Committee, may be very properly followed by the parts of their Lordships report in 1850, which relate to the same subjects :—

Referring to the allegation, That the existing Squadron increases the sufferings of the transported African, their Lordships observe :—"Even if this had "been established, we do not conceive that it would "have been a sufficient reason for withdrawing the "Squadron, since the sufferings of the transported "Africans, fearful as they are, is the least evil of a "system which fills the populous Continent of Africa "with intestine war, insecurity, and bloodshed. But, "further, we cannot conclude, from the evidence "before us, that these sufferings are increased by the "presence of the British Squadron, when compared "with the horrors of the middle passage, *even under* "*the regulated trade.* The presence of the Squadron "has led to the employment of faster transports ; it "has greatly increased the value of the living cargo ; "and the withdrawal of the Cruisers would, in the "judgment of some, even of the witnesses most favour-"able to such a course, lead to the employment of a "worse class of vessels than those now used in the "trade."

With respect to the preposterous notion that Great Britain should superintend and regulate the Slave Trade of Brazil, their Lordships state :—

"That to withdraw the Cruisers in part, and to

"administer a regulated Slave Trade (as has been "suggested), would be impossible of execution, no "material saving of the cost of the present system, "and utterly at variance with every past profession of "Great Britain on this subject since she abolished the "British Slave Trade."

Mr. Stokes' evidence consisted of only a small portion of the authentic proofs in his possession, of the horrors of the Slave Trade, whether regulated or unrestricted, and showing that there has been no aggravation of suffering caused by the cruizing Squadron.

It will be probably agreed that no further evidence on this subject was required; but in explanation of some exaggerated statements of the present mortality, founded on single and exceptional cases, it may be worth while to observe that, in a paper furnished by Mr. Bandinel to Mr. Hutt's Committee, the following proportions of deaths are shown to have occurred in voyages during the English Slave Trade.

50 per cent.
20 „
20 „
30 „
33 „
25 „
30 „
50 „

Still, Mr. Bandinel calculates the *average* loss at only 13 per cent., as well after as before the traffic was regulated by Act of Parliament, a measure which Mr.

Bandinel evidently regards as having had no practical effect in reducing the mortality of the middle passage.

An impression is, however, abroad, which has received some countenance from a tale of fiction in a popular periodical,* that slave traders are in the habit of throwing overboard their slaves in order to avoid seizure by the British Squadron. An instance occurred in the River Bonny some twenty years ago, at which time, unless slaves were actually on board, the vessel could not be condemned; but slave vessels have now, for a long course of years, been liable to seizure whether slaves are on board or not, and any one of various internal fittings, and equipments of which such a vessel cannot divest herself, is now sufficient to warrant her capture and insure her condemnation. Thus, no motive now exists for similar atrocities as a means of escaping capture.

It may be useful to add that shortly after these murders were committed by the slave dealers in the Bonny, a constant watch of that river was maintained by the English cruizers; the last twelve slave vessels that sailed from it were successively captured; and at length the slave dealers abandoned their factories in despair. Twenty thousand tons of British shipping are now employed in the Bonny trade†, and are freighted annually with the fruits of native industry; while for ten years no slave vessel has ever entered the river!

* Household Words.

† Vide the Report of the Lords' Committee.

As regards one instance (which is not the only one) of slaves being thrown overboard to escape capture, Mr. Stokes has supplied the following facts, showing that the practice existed long before the Slave Trade was treated as a crime, when it arose from motives which still operate, and with which repressive measures had, as they can have now, no possible concern.

"March 9, 1783. Gustavus Vasa called on me with an account of 132 negroes being thrown alive into the sea, from on board an English slave-ship.

"The circumstances of this case could not fail to excite a deep interest. The master of a slave-ship trading from Africa to Jamaica, and having 440 slaves on board, had thought fit, on a pretext that he might be distressed on his voyage for want of water, to lessen the consumption of it in the vessel, *by throwing overboard* 132 *of the most sickly among the slaves.* On his return to England, the owners of the ship claimed from the insurers the full value of those drowned slaves, on the ground that there was an absolute necessity for throwing them into the sea, in order to save the remaining crew, and the ship itself. The underwriters contested the existence of the alleged necessity; or, if it had existed, attributed to the ignorance and improper conduct of the master of the vessel. This contest of pecuniary interest brought to light a scene of horrid brutality which had been acted during the execution of a detestable plot. Upon the trial* it appeared that the ship Zong, Luke Colling-

* The case was tried in the Court of King's Bench before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield.

wood, master, sailed from the island of St. Thomas, on the coast of Africa, September 6, 1781, with 440 slaves and fourteen whites on board, for Jamaica, and that in the November following she fell in with that island; but, instead of proceeding to some port, the master, mistaking, as he alleges, Jamaica for Hispaniola, ran her to leeward. Sickness and mortality had by this time taken place on board the crowded vessel; so that, between the time of leaving the coast of Africa and the 29th of November, sixty slaves and seven white people had died; and a great number of the surviving slaves were then sick and not likely to live. On that day the master of the ship called together a few of the officers, and stated to them that, if the sick slaves died a natural death, the loss would fall on the owners of the ship; *but, if they were thrown alive into the sea, on any sufficient pretext of necessity for the safety of the ship, it would be the loss of the underwriters*, alleging, at the same time, that it would be less cruel to throw sick wretches into the sea, than to suffer them to linger out a few days under the disorder with which they were afflicted.

"To this inhuman proposal the mate, James Kelsal, at first objected; but Collingwood at length prevailed on the crew to listen it. *He then chose out from the cargo* 132 *slaves, and brought them on deck*, all or most of whom were sickly, and not likely to recover, and *he ordered the crew by turns to throw them into the sea.* 'A parcel' of them were accordingly thrown overboard, and, on counting over the remainder the

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morning, it appeared that the number so drowned had been fifty-four. He then *ordered another parcel to be thrown over*, which, on a second counting on the succeeding day, was proved to have amounted to forty-two.

"*On the third day the remaining thirty-six were brought on deck, and, as these now resisted the cruel purpose of their masters, the arms of twenty-six were fettered with irons, and the savage crew proceeded with the diabolical work, casting them down to join their comrades of the former days.* Outraged misery could endure no longer, the ten last victims sprang disdainfully from the grasp of their tyrants, defied their power, and, leaping into the sea, felt a momentary triumph in the embrace of death."*

* "Memoirs of Granville Sharpe," edited by Prince Hoare. London, 1820, pp. 236—238.

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